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ABSTRACT

Two ninth-grade English teachers developed a unit of study on the Holocaust that is rooted in an understanding of the concepts and consequences of indifference and prejudice. Activities in the unit of study use a variety of communication skills. Because the teachers have found that journal writing is an effective tool for reflection and a source of dialogue, students are required to keep a journal throughout the year. Topics of study in the unit are indifference, stereotyping, prejudice, and Elie Wiesel's book "Night." Appendixes contain discussion questions based on quotes by Pastor Niemoeller and John Donne; a reading selection on stereotypes and choices; a brief history of anti-Semitism; a poem; questions based on Wiesel's "Night"; a choral reading sample; a response to Executive Order 9066: All Americans of Japanese Descent Must Report to Relocation Centers; Report to survivor testimonials; and a list of books and supplemental activities. (RS)

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Teaching the Holocaust
in the
High School English Class

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Holocaust Unit - Grade 9 - English

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During the freshmen year we provide students with activities designed to awaken in them a human connection to all people and in so doing challenge them to act. We design activities that require the use of a variety of communication skills. Units of study are rooted in an understanding of the concepts and consequences of indifference and prejudice.

We have found the journal to be an effective tool for reflection and a source for dialogue. For this reason we require students to keep a journal throughout the year.

Literature has the power to teach history. As English teachers we always knew this; but as we became consumed by the topic of the Holocaust, we assumed the responsibility of sharing with our students the wealth of information we continued to discover. Perhaps we lost track of our focus because we were driven by a frantic need to answer each student's question, "Why?" We, as teachers and human beings, have come full circle. Once again our Holocaust unit focuses on the reading and discussion of Elie Wiesel's *Night*.

Topics of Study

- **Indifference**

1. Students record in their journals their thoughts about the word "indifference."
2. Class discussion follows to agree on a definition.
3. In journals students are asked to describe a time when they have been indifferent, have observed someone else being indifferent, or have been treated with indifference.
4. Students share journal entries with the class.
5. Teacher reads to class *Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting (does not read preface.)
6. Class completes "Personal Responsibility Reading /Response" (Appendix A).
7. Class discusses the connection among the concept of indifference, the book *Terrible Things* and the quotes by Niemoller and Donne. If appropriate, broaden the discussion to include studies in other disciplines. A visual diagram (a web works well) may help students "see" the connection.
8. Assignment: write or email a representative of congress regarding US involvement or lack of involvement in any identified current event.

•Stereotyping

1. Share the following explanation of stereotyping with the class. In their journals have them discuss to what group they belong and the ways in which that group is stereotyped. Facilitate group discussion.

Stereotyping categorizes people. Stereotyping is also having an oversimplified opinion, idea, or belief about an entire group of people. This generalization is often a negative one, something we do not like about a group. For example, we might say things like: "All (a particular group of people) are tightwads." or... "All are stupid." If we believe in stereotypes and spread them in our conversations and jokes, we forget to treat members of a particular group as individuals with special talents and gifts.

2. Class completes and discusses "Reading 2 Stereotypes and Choices" (Appendix B).

3. Group project possibilities:

- Students take a minority group or cultural background that is different from their own. They do some brainstorming and write down what they think it would be like to belong to that group. Students are asked to document where their ideas come from - for example - movies, books, history, friends, jokes, TV, etc. Then they try to find someone who is a member of that group (via Internet if live sources not available) to determine which of their ideas are wrong and which are correct. They present this experience in a myth - fact format on a poster.
- Students explore one form of communication (comic strips, talk radio, television, advertising, movies, political speeches, books, magazines, newspapers, Internet) and report the kinds of stereotyping being used to promote an image about a group. Presentation must be in the format of the media explored.

3. Teacher shows film "Eye of the Beholder" *Twilight Zone* episode. The film is used to connect stereotyping to prejudice. The girl in the film is stereotyped according to her physical traits. These physical differences are not tolerated by her community and lead to her exile because the people harbor prejudice against her.

Prejudice

1. Share and discuss the following definition of prejudice:

Prejudice is an irrational suspicion of a certain group, race, or religion. Synonyms for the word are bigotry and intolerance. A prejudiced person has a negative opinion or attitude about an individual or group even though he or she may not know that individual or group personally. Judgment of that person or group is not based on facts but rather on stereotypes, preconceived ideas, or preferences.

If we are prejudiced, we may be unwilling to make friends with someone of another race or ethnic group. In addition to hurting the feelings of that other person, we miss out on all of the benefits of having a friend who could enrich our lives by sharing cultural differences. And we also miss a chance to learn just how alike we are.

2. Students are asked to respond to definition in their journals. Ask them to be specific and think of a situation in their own lives, in the news, and in another media that involved prejudice.
3. Use Reading/Response "History of Anti Semitism" (Appendix C) to demonstrate the culminating potential of indifference, stereotyping, and prejudice.

Night

1. Teacher reads poem "On Weisel's *Night*" by Thomas E. Thorton (Appendix D) to students. (Some teachers feel no other introduction is warranted.) Teacher explains to students how the journal will be used to keep track of nightly reading, the students affective response to the book, Eliezer's transformation, and the use of language.

The following questions are sometimes suitable for keeping reluctant readers and those who are concrete learners on task and involved. (See Appendix E.)

2. As a final, written reflection on the book, students are asked to develop an essay that traces the transformation of Eliezer. Students are encouraged to cite specific examples and quotes to support their ideas.
3. For enrichment or as a culminating activity that lends itself to sharing with others - students create a "found" poem from which they create choral readings. (This activity is more meaningful if students have read poems written by children imprisoned at Terezin) To create these ""found" poems students take only words from the text and compose a poem from them. Words can be used in any order and a theme should direct the poem's course. See sample of choral reading (Appendix F).
4. Once the study of *Night* is complete, students discuss in their journals why Wiesel wrote about his experiences. Then students read and discuss, as a class, the Preface to the 25th Anniversary edition to *Night* by Wiesel. In addition - share with students the survivor testimonials (Appendix G).

5. Group Project: The teacher introduces this project with the following anonymous quote:

Indifference to me is the epitome of evil. The opposite of love is not hate but indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness but indifference; the opposite of faith is not heresy but indifference; and the opposite of life is not death but indifference.

Because of indifference one dies before one actually dies. To be in the window and watch people being sent to concentration camps or being attacked in the street and to do nothing, that's being dead.

Students choose an issue about which group members can take a stand. Then the group develops a plan of action and implements it. The group will be expected to keep track of its meetings, decisions, and actions. In addition they will be required to document their actions and share them in a presentation to the class.

6. To close this unit a student rereads the book *Terrible Things* and includes the preface this time.

Suggested enrichment activities and readings:

Movies/videos

(We recommend students view these in groups and be given clear guidelines for viewing that will lead to critiques that can be shared on numerous Internet sites.)

- *Escape from Sobibor*
- *Hannah's War*
- *Never Forget*
- *Playing for Time*
- *Murderers Among Us*
- *Skokie*
- *Triumph of the Spirit*
- *Swing Kids*
- *Max and Helen*
- *Europa Europa (subtitled)*

Books and supplemental activities (Appendix H).

Children's Opera

The Terezin Project 802-492-3517 - this project offers opportunities for participation and viewing.

Appendices

Beatty, Jane N. Literature and Language Blue Level. New York:
McDougall, Littell & Company, 1992, 504. (Appendix F)

Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc. A Guide to the Film
Schindler's List. Brookline, MA: Facing History Foundation,
1994, 14-16. (Appendix B)

Bolkosky, Sidney M. et al. A Holocaust Curriculum Life Unworthy of Life.
Detroit: Jewish Community Council, 1987, 16, 22-25. (Appendices A,C)

Reading 2C

QUOTATIONS BY PASTOR NIEMOELLER AND JOHN DONNE

Read each question first. Then, read the selection "Quotations by Pastor Niemoeller and John Donne." Finally, discuss the questions.

Questions

1. What does Pastor Niemoeller imply about speaking up for the rights of others?
2. What does John Donne mean by "no man is an island"?

Pastor Niemoeller (was imprisoned for opposing Nazi attacks upon the Christian religion):

"In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists and I did not speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak up because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I was a Protestant so I did not speak up. Then they came for me . . . by that time there was no one to speak up for anyone."

John Donne (the 16th century English poet and preacher):

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were . . . Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never seek to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

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Reading 2

Stereotypes and Choices

We all know we are unique individuals but we tend to see others as representatives of groups.

One of the factors that influences our decisions is our need to belong. Like Eve Shalen, each of us yearns to be a part of the group. And all too often we make our choices based on our need to be accepted by others even though "the satisfaction does not last." This reading explores yet another factor that affects our decisions: the images we have of ourselves and others. Psychologist Deborah Tannen writes, "We all know we are unique individuals but we tend to see others as representatives of groups. It's a natural tendency; since we must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it; we wouldn't be able to deal with the daily onslaught of people and objects if we couldn't predict a lot about them and feel that we know who or what they are." Although Tannen considers it "natural" to generalize, she views stereotypes as offensive. A *stereotype* is more than a judgment about an individual based on the characteristics of a group. Stereotyping reduces individuals to categories. The two short stories included in this reading suggest some of the ways stereotyping influences the choices we make.

In *The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros writes:

Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous. They think we will attack them with shiny knives. They are stupid people who are lost and got here by mistake.

But we aren't afraid. We know the guy with the crooked eye is Davy the Baby's brother and the tall one next to him in the straw brim, that's Rosa's Eddie V. and the big one that looks like a dumb grown man, he's Fat Boy, though he's not fat anymore nor a boy.

All brown all around, we are safe. But watch us drive into a neighborhood of another color and our knees go shakity-shake and our car windows get rolled up tight and our eyes look straight. Yeah. That is how it goes and goes.

And so "it goes and goes" with *us* against *them*. Is it as inevitable as Cisneros implies that we view *them* as representatives of groups while we see *ourselves* as individuals? Although it is "natural" to generalize, stereotyping reflects an unwillingness to alter a judgment and recognize others as individuals. Therefore stereotyping can lead to prejudice and discrimination. The word *prejudice* comes from the word pre-judge. We *pre-judge* when we have an opinion about a person because of his or her membership in a particular group. A prejudice has the following characteristics:

- It is based on differences between groups.
- It attaches values to those differences in ways that benefit one group at the expense of the *other*.
- It is generalized to all members of a group.

Discrimination occurs when prejudices are translated into action. Not every stereotype results in discrimination. But all stereotypes tend to divide a society into *us* and *them*, as Jesus Colon discovered while riding the subway one evening.

It was very late at night on the eve of Memorial Day. She came into the subway at the 34th Street Pennsylvania Station. I am still trying to remember how she managed to push herself in with a baby on her right arm, a valise in her left hand and two children, a boy and girl about three and five years old,

trailing after her. She was a nice-looking white lady in her early twenties.

At Nevins Street, Brooklyn, we saw her preparing to get off at the next station—Atlantic Avenue—which happened to be the place where I too had to get off. Just as it was a problem for her to get on, it was going to a problem for her to get off the subway with two small children to be taken care of, a baby on her right arm, and a medium-sized valise in her left hand.

And there I was, also preparing to get off at Atlantic Avenue, with no bundles to take care of—not even the customary book under my arm, without which I feel that I am not completely dressed.

As the train was entering the Atlantic Avenue station, some white man stood up from his seat and helped her out, placing the children on the long, deserted platform. There were only two adult persons on the long platform some time after midnight on the evening of last Memorial Day.

I could perceive the steep, long concrete stairs going down to the Long Island Railroad or into the street. Should I offer my help as the American white man did at the subway door, placing the two children outside the subway car? Should I take care of the girl and the boy, take them by their hands until they reached the end of the steep, long concrete stairs of the Atlantic Avenue station?

Courtesy is a characteristic of the Puerto Rican. And here I was—a Puerto Rican hours past midnight, a valise, two white children and a white lady with a baby on her arm badly needing somebody to help her, at least until she descended the long concrete stairs.

But how could I, a Negro and a Puerto Rican, approach this white lady, who very likely might have preconceived prejudices about Negroes and everybody with foreign accents, in a deserted subway station very late at night?

What would she say? What would be the first reaction of this white American woman perhaps coming from a small town with a valise, two children and a baby on her right arm? Would she say: Yes, of course, you may help me. Or would she think that I was just trying to get too familiar? Or would she think worse than that perhaps? What would I do if she let out a scream as I went forward to offer my help?

Was I misjudging her? So many slanders are written every day in the daily press against the Negroes and Puerto Ricans. I hesitated for a long, long minute. The ancestral manners that the most illiterate Puerto Rican passes on from father to son were struggling inside me. Here was I, way past midnight, face to face with a situation that could very well explode into an outburst of prejudices and chauvinistic conditioning of the “divide and rule” policy of present-day society.

It was a long minute. I passed on by her as if I saw nothing. As if I was insensitive to her need. Like a rude animal walking on two legs, I just moved on, half running by the long subway platform, leaving the children and the valise and her with the baby on her arm. I took the steps of the long concrete stairs in twos until I reached the street above and the cold air slapped my warm face.

This is what racism and prejudice and chauvinism and official artificial divisions can do to people and to a nation!

Perhaps the lady was not prejudiced after all. Or not prejudiced enough to scream at the coming of a Negro toward her in a solitary subway station a few

Although it is “natural” to generalize, stereotyping reflects an unwillingness to alter a judgment and recognize others as individuals. Therefore stereotyping can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

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hours past midnight.

If you were not that prejudiced, I failed you, dear lady. I know that there is a chance in a million that you will read these lines. I am willing to take the millionth chance. If you were not that prejudiced, I failed you, lady. I failed you, children. I failed myself to myself.

I buried my courtesy early on Memorial Day morning. But here is a promise that I made to myself here and now; if I am ever faced with an occasion like that again, I am going to offer my help regardless of how the offer is going to be received.

Then I will have my courtesy with me again.

Connections

Sandra Cisneros refers to outsiders as "those who don't know better." What is she suggesting about the way ignorance shapes *their* perceptions of *us*? How then does knowledge affect the way *we* perceive ourselves? What does her story suggest about the way ignorance affects our views of others? Our behavior?

Is Cisneros right to suggest that we see *them* as dangerous? That we make our decisions about *them* based on stereotypes? Do you agree that it will continue to "go and go" with *us* against *them*? How can we break the cycle of myth and misinformation that *we* have about *them* and *they* have about *us*?

⇒ What role do stereotypes play in your community? Find examples of the ways they influence decisions. What role do prejudice and discrimination play? Look for examples of the ways they influence decisions and then review the identity chart you created (p. 13). To what groups do you belong? How do your memberships affect your view of outsiders? How do stereotypes shape your thinking? Your decisions? Does stereotyping lead to prejudice and discrimination?

Jesus Colon describes labels that others have placed on him. What stereotypes does he hold about the groups to which he belongs? About other groups? How did those stereotypes shape the way he perceived his choices and the decision he made? Why does he have regrets? Do you think he made the right choice? Would your answer be different if he were a white American? Or if the woman were black?

The word *civility* is often defined as a work of the imagination, for it is through the imagination that we render others sufficiently like ourselves that we view them as worthy of tolerance and respect, if not always affection. How are *courtesy* and *civility* related? What does Colon mean when he says, "I buried my courtesy early on Memorial Day morning"? What is the significance of that loss?

⇒ How can we learn empathy—that is, to see others as sufficiently like ourselves that we regard them as worthy of tolerance and respect? What experiences have helped you understand other points of view? What experiences have had the opposite effect? Look for examples in the news. Interview friends and adults about experiences that have brought together people from different neighborhoods and backgrounds.

Reading 3B**BRIEF HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM****Questions**

1. How did Jews maintain a community after being scattered throughout Europe?
2. How and why did the early Christians set themselves apart from other Jews?
3. How did some Christians view the Jews during the Middle Ages?
4. What were some of the differences between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages?
5. How were Jews discriminated against during the Middle Ages?
6. What occupations were available to Jews as a result of this discrimination during the Middle Ages?
7. Why did Christians believe that Jews murdered Christian children?
8. What were some of the gains made by Jews during the 19th century?
9. What were some of the characteristics racists claimed Jews inherited?
10. How did people react to the belief that Jews inherited "rootlessness"?
11. Is there any historical evidence to support the myths of Jews as devils and murderers?

As a result of the conquests of their biblical homeland by Persians, Greeks, Assyrians and Romans, Jews were scattered throughout Europe. However, the Hebrew Bible created unity among the Jews even though they settled far from each other in very different cultures. They continued to pray in Hebrew, even as they took on the languages of the different host nations. They also continued to follow the laws and religious observances of the Bible. They carried with them their customs, religious rituals and beliefs.

At first, anti-Jewish feelings were primarily a religious matter. Christianity was a child of Judaism and considered one of its branches or sects. Jesus was a Jew who quoted from and interpreted the Hebrew Bible. Yet, the dilemma for early Christians arose from the refusal of other Jews to accept Jesus as the messiah. There had been Jewish groups that had accepted earlier messiahs. None of those groups, however, had broken with Judaism until this one. That break began soon after the death of Jesus with the teachings of Paul. He sought to gain non-Jewish followers for Christianity. Paul accomplished this by dropping the requirements of conversion: Christians would no longer have to follow the dietary and ritual laws of Judaism. He also abandoned the requirement of circumcision considered by Jews to be the biblical mark of the "covenant of Abraham." Paul's followers became the new Christians, separated from the parent religion, Judaism.

When the Jews tried to drive the Romans out of their homeland, the Roman armies destroyed the holy Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This dealt a crushing blow to the Jewish religion, as Jews were driven from their country and dispersed or scattered all over Europe. New Christian communities on the outskirts of the Roman world were unaffected by the destruction of the Temple. Their separation from Judaism widened even more.

Europe gradually became Christian through wandering Christian missionaries like Paul. In the 3rd century A.D., Christianity had achieved such success that it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Jews were a small minority. They were considered foreigners and outsiders, strangely different. Some church officials even accused them of being agents of the devil.

The Jews continued their religious and social practices and, consequently, set themselves apart from Christian society. Christians were no longer instructed in the Hebrew Bible and often forgot the roots they shared with Jews. Jews persisted in praying in Hebrew, reading from right to left. Christians saw Hebrew as a collection of symbols having to do with witchcraft. Jews ate different foods and refused to eat what Christians ate, pork, for example. Christians saw these differences as mysterious and evil. Jews celebrated the Sabbath on Saturday rather than Sunday. Christians called this witch's or devil's Sabbath.

As they had for thousands of years, Jews practiced circumcision as a sign of their "covenant with God." Christians saw this as an evil custom somehow related to the sign of the devil. Eventually, Jews dressed differently. They maintained traditional customs, like growing long beards, while modern practice changed to shaving. Jews became stereotyped in their physical appearance.

Throughout the Middle Ages, local governments discriminated against Jews, denying them the right to own land or hold public office. Medieval unions (guilds) refused membership to Jews so that they could not work in many occupations. The effect of this prejudicial treatment and isolation was to force Jews into commerce, and many became merchants. Although the majority remained poor, some became wealthy. Because the Church prohibited money lending, Jews were among the first bankers. This historical condition would foster a stereotype of Jews as money lenders. That stereotype would increase persecution, especially in economically hard times.

From the 12th to the 20th centuries, Jews were persecuted, tried and murdered on the basis of many myths. The myth that Jews murdered Christian children, for example, was created in Norwich, England, around 1150 by a superstitious priest and an insane monk when a Christian boy was found dead. The boy was probably killed by an outlaw. The two clergymen invented the story that this murder was part of a Jewish plot to kill Christian children. The myth became more mysterious and complicated when the story that Jews required the blood of Christian children to make unleavened bread (matzos) for Passover was invented and added to it. Even some saints had supposedly accused Jews of murdering Christian children for their blood. Such stories spread across Europe and the Nazis would later manipulate them and other legends to stimulate racist anti-Semitism.

From the late Middle Ages on, anti-Semitism was expressed in many ways. Jews were expelled from cities or forced to live in restricted areas. Jews were excluded from various occupations and denied citizenship. However, in the second half of the 19th century, Europe became more democratic. The full or partial emancipation of the Jews was achieved in Prussia, France, England and other nations. This meant that Jews officially were granted limited or full civil rights by governments. Also, some economic and social restrictions were gradually removed by law. However, anti-Semitic feelings and beliefs lingered. Myths, superstitions and deep-seated beliefs still clung to Europeans and had become part of the fabric of their civilization. Occasionally, anti-Semitism exploded into violence.

The 19th century saw the beginnings of an anti-Semitism not based on religion but on theories that Jews were a separate "race." At the time, "race" meant a group of people set apart because of genetically inherited characteristics such as skin color. Some even believed that cultural characteristics such as beliefs, customs and behaviors were inherited by members of a race.

By distorting Jewish history, 19th century racists labeled Jews as wanderers who inherited their "rootlessness" through their "blood." Thus, their nature was determined by heredity and unchangeable. Wanderers were strangers; and as in the Middle Ages, people feared strangers. They saw them as dangerous criminals, wrapped in mystery and evil. Hate-mongers claimed that for the safety of Christian children, Jews had to be avoided. Or, better yet, they urged that Jews should be kept at a distance or driven out of Christian communities. There was no other choice—character was inherited, it could not be changed. Such a theory, pretending to be scientific, was adopted by Hitler and others who transformed theory to practice in the Holocaust.

Poor farmers and struggling urban people were suffering from the effects of the industrial revolution of the 19th century. Many lost their land. Many lost their jobs. Many lost their status and prestige. Worse, growing numbers of them could not feed their families or provide shelter for them in the new environment of the city slum. Nothing was certain any more. Some blamed their situation on the "rootless Jew" who became a scapegoat. They repeated the stories about the "rootless wandering Jew" and the ritual murders. They harped on the Jews as merchants and bringers of urban, commercial civilization.

Anti-Semites in the 19th and 20th centuries inflamed fear and hatred that had lurked beneath the surface. The myth of a world Jewish conspiracy was fostered by a notorious forgery called *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This book claimed that the Jews of the world were plotting to take over the governments of Christian countries and, thereby, added fuel to the fire.

The myths and stereotypes of Jews were based on deliberate lies and ancient superstitions. It did not even matter if anti-Semites knew Jews who did not fit the stereotypes. Because they are based on irrational fear or resentment, stereotypes reject specific evidence. The real world does not matter when fear, superstition and resentment are at work.

With an ancient tradition of religious hostility to draw upon, racism brought together fake scientific theories and anti-Jewish stereotypes. It offered solutions to economic and social problems and promised a hope for a better future once the offending group was removed from society. Without critical thinking or questioning, frequently in blatant defiance of Christian morality, educated and uneducated people accepted the stereotypes and the mythology with terrifying results.

A definition of anti-Semitism might be: hostility toward Jews as individuals, toward Judaism as a religion, toward the Jewish people as a group. Throughout history, it has expressed itself through religious prejudice, social exclusion, economic boycotts, restrictive laws, physical attacks, killings and exiling of identifiable Jews.

Different Types of Anti-Semitism

- Religious anti-Semitism: Through the Middle Ages, the persecution of the Jews was based on religious differences (rituals, belief in Jesus as the messiah, etc.). If Jews would convert to Christianity, they would be accepted. If they did not convert, they were segregated, expelled or killed.
- Secular anti-Semitism: Beginning around the 18th century, as Europe became less religious, Jews suffered social and economic discrimination. They were forced to live in restricted areas, denied citizenship, excluded from various occupations, etc. Even if they converted to Christianity, Christian communities would not accept them.
- Racial anti-Semitism: By the late 19th century, Jews were seen as an inferior and dangerous "race." Racists argued that, like blue eyes, historically determined cultural traits such as business skills were passed on through the genes. The "logic" of this thinking leads to extermination.

Summary: The history of anti-Semitism can, thus, be summed up as described by Raul Hilberg in *The Destruction of the European Jews* as

- Religious: You may not live among us as Jews.
- Secular: You may not live among us.
- Racial: You may not live.

On Wiesel's *Night*

I cannot teach this book. Instead,
I drop copies on their desks,
like bombs on sleeping towns,
and let them read. So do I, again.
The stench rises from the page
and chokes my throat.

The ghosts of burning babies
haunt my eyes.

And that bouncing baton,
that pointer of Death,
stabs me in the heart
as it sends his mother
to the blackening sky.
Nothing is destroyed
the laws of science say,
only changed.

The millions transformed into
precious smoke ride the wind
to fill our lungs and hearts
with their cries.

No, I cannot teach this book.
I simply want the words
to burn their comfortable souls
and leave them scarred for life.

Thomas E. Thorton
East Greenbrush, New York

February 1990 87

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NIGHT PAGES 1-20

NAME _____

- 1.What year is it?
- 2.How old is Elie?
- 3.Where does he live?
- 4.Describe Elie's father.

- 5.Who is Elie's instructor in the cabbala?
- 6.Who is exiled?
- 7.What does Mosha the Beadle warn everyone of?
- 8.Why won't the people believe him?
- 9.Why won't Elie's father leave when he has the chance?

- 0
- 10.State four changes that occur after the Germans come to town.
A.
B.
C.
D.

- 11.Describe the ghettos.

- 12.Who tries to warns Elie's family and why?

- 13.What are the Jews allowed to take with them on deportation?
- 14.Why does Elie hate the Hungarian Police so much?

- 15.Who offers Elie's family refuge?
- 16.How are the Jews deported?
- 17.What will happen if anyone escapes?

*****&&&&%&%&%&%&%\$\$\$\$\$#@!!!!!()!!!!#@\$&%&%&%&%*&%*&%*&%@
EXPLAIN WHAT THE FOLLOWING QUOTE MEANS ON THE BACK OF THE PAPER.

"HE EXPLAINED TO ME WITH GREAT INSISTENCE THAT EVERY QUESTION POSSESSED A POWER THAT DID NOT LIE IN THE ANSWER." p.2

1. Describe the Jews' traveling experience.
2. What does Madame Schachter become distraught over?
3. What is their final destination?
4. What greets the Jews at Birkenau?
5. What happens to the men and women?
6. Why do Elie and his father lie about their ages?
7. What SS officer is Elie questioned by?
8. Describe the horrible sights that Elie encounters at Auschwitz.
9. What makes Elie lose faith in his God?
10. Explain how the prisoners are dehumanized and treated like animals.

11. Why doesn't Elie lose his new shoes?
12. What happens when Elie's father asks to go to the bathroom?
13. What does Elie do to help his father?
14. Explain why it is ironic that the men are constantly taking showers.

15. How are Elie and the other prisoners identified?
16. Describe the rations of food given to the prisoners.
17. Why does Elie lie to Stein when Stein asks about the welfare of his family?
18. What is the name of the new camp they are transported to?

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- 1.What is the first thing the prisoners must do at the new camp?
- 2.Why do the guards like children?
- 3.What is the dentist looking for and why?
- 4.What job do Elie and his father get?
- 5.What kind of music are the Jews forbidden to play?
- 6.Why do you think they are forbidden to play this music?
- 7.How does Elie save his gold crown?
- 8.What is the most important thing to the prisoners?
- 9.Why does Elie do nothing while his father is beaten?
- 10.How and why does Elie lose his gold crown?
- 11.Why is Elie whipped?
- 12.Describe the incident with the abandoned soup cauldrons.
- 13.Why is one of the prisoners hanged?
- 14.What is the only hanging the prisoners cried over and why?

SHORT ESSAY

ON PAGE 60, ELIE SAYS, "I REMEMBER THAT I FOUND THE SOUP EXCELLENT THAT EVENING." ON PAGE 62, HE SAYS, "THAT NIGHT THE SOUP TASTED OF CORPSES."

BOTH OF THESE STATEMENTS ARE MADE AFTER A FELLOW PRISONER IS KILLED.

1.WHAT PROMPTED ELIE TO MAKE SUCH TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STATEMENTS.

2.DO YOU FEEL THESE STATEMENTS ARE FAIRLY STATED WHEN CONSIDERING THE EVENTS THAT PRECEDED THEM? WHY OR WHY NOT?

1. Why does Elie rebel from his God?
2. Explain this quote on page 65, "We had never understood one another so clearly."
3. How has Buna changed from what it was 2 years before?
4. What advice are the prisoners given on how to abeat the selection?
5. What happens to Elie's dad in the Selection?
6. What is Elie's inheritance?
7. Why is Elie hospitalized?
8. Explain how it is ironic that the prisoners have "more faith in Hitler than anyone else." (page 77)
9. Why does Elie leave the hospital?
10. What happened to the the prisoners left in the hospital?
11. What happens to the prisoners who are left in the infirmary?
12. Why do the SS officers order the prisoners to wash the barracks?
13. While evacuating the camp, what happens to the prisoners who run too slowly?
14. How many miles have the prisoners already covered?
15. After they stop, from what do many of the prisoners die?
16. Explain this quote on page 87, "...give me strength never to do what Rabbi Eliahou's son has done."
17. What does Juliek do before he dies?
18. What do the prisoners have to eat?

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WHAT IS THE WORST EXPERIENCE THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?
EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED AND YOUR FEELINGS AT THE TIME. ARE YOU
ABLE TO LOOK BACK NOW AND OBJECTIVELY EVALUATE THE
SITUATION? DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING FROM THIS OCCURRENCE?

1. How does Elie save his father?
2. How many bodies are thrown out of the wagon?
3. For how long do the prisoners travel?
4. Describe what happens when pieces of bread are thrown into the wagon.

5. Describe how a father and son come to be lying dead beside each other.

6. How old is Elie now?
7. How many survive the trip to Buchenwald?
8. Again, what is Elie's fear?
9. Why does Elie's father give up his will to live?
10. Describe Elie's reaction when he loses his father.
11. How come the ill prisoners are not fed?
12. Why are Elie's father's bunk companions beating him?
13. Explain this quote on page 104, "water was the worst poison he could have."

14. What advice does the head of the block give to Elie?
15. Why is Elie's father beaten?
16. What is Elie's reaction to this beating?
17. What is Elie's reaction to his father's death?
18. What orders are given on April 5?
19. How many days has it been since Elie has eaten?
20. What were Elie's first thoughts after the camp was liberated?
21. Why is Elie hospitalized?
22. Explain this quote on page 108, "From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me."

Is Elie an example of "the survival of the fittest" or survival of the luckiest? Use direct references and specific examples from the book to prove your point. Modern day references or examples may be beneficial to prove your point.

Kelly Budd
October 9, 1996

In groups of five, please read the original version of the following poem aloud. Have at least two people read the poem aloud completely through so that you may hear different voices. Then assign one person to be speaker #1, another to be speaker #2, and three to speak the group responses. Practice reading the poem through once following the instructions on the second version of the poem. You may choose the tone, rate, and volume of your voices.

**In Response to Executive Order 9066: All Americans of Japanese Descent
Must Report to Relocation Centers (speaker 1)**
Dwight Okita (speaker 2)

Dear Sirs: (speaker 1)

Of course I'll come. (speaker 1 repeat two times) I've packed my galoshes (speaker 1) and three packets of tomato seeds. Janet calls them (speaker 1) "love apples." (group repeat 2 times) My father says (speaker 1) where we're going they won't grow (speaker 2) they won't grow. (group repeat 2 times)

I am a fourteen-year-old girl with bad spelling (speaker 1) and a messy room. If it helps any, I will tell you (speaker 1) I have always felt funny using chopsticks (speaker 1) and my favorite food is hotdogs. (group)

My best friend is a white girl named Denise - (speaker 1) we look at boys together. (speaker 1) together (group repeat 2 times)

She sat in front of me (speaker 1) all through grade school because of our names: (speaker 1) O'Connor, Ozawa. (group)

I know the back of Denise's head very well. (speaker 1) I tell her she's going bald. (speaker 1) She tells me I copy on tests. (speaker 2) We're best friends. (group repeat 2 times)

I saw Denise today in Geography class. (speaker 1) She was sitting on the other side of the room. (speaker 1) "You're trying to start a war," (speaker 2) she said, (speaker 1)

"giving secrets away (speaker 2) to the Enemy. Why can't you keep your big mouth shut?" (speaker 2) I didn't know what to say. (speaker 1) I gave her a packet of tomato seeds (speaker 1) and asked her to plant them for me, told her (speaker 1) when the first tomato ripens (speaker 2) to miss me. (speaker 1) to miss me. (group repeat 2 times)

INSIGHT

In Response to Executive Order 9066: All Americans of Japanese Descent Must Report to Relocation Centers

DWIGHT OKITA (ō kē' tō)

Dear Sirs:

Of course I'll come. I've packed my galoshes and three packets of tomato seeds. Janet calls them "love apples." My father says where we're going they won't grow.

I am a fourteen-year-old girl with bad spelling and a messy room. If it helps any, I will tell you I have always felt funny using chopsticks and my favorite food is hot dogs.

My best friend is a white girl named Denise—we look at boys together. She sat in front of me all through grade school because of our names: O'Connor, Ozawa. I know the back of Denise's head very well. I tell her she's going bald. She tells me I copy on tests. We're best friends.

I saw Denise today in Geography class. She was sitting on the other side of the room.

"You're trying to start a war," she said, "giving secrets away to the Enemy. Why can't you keep your big mouth shut?"

I didn't know what to say.

I gave her a packet of tomato seeds and asked her to plant them for me, told her when the first tomato ripens to miss me.

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Appendix G

And yet in spite of it all I refuse to listen to them. I feel that continuing this diary to the very end of my physical and spiritual strength is a historical mission which must not be abandoned. My mind is still clear, my need to record unstilled, though it is now five days since any real food has passed my lips. Therefore, I will not silence my diary.

Chaim Potok

I write to prove that I am alive,
that I exist, that I too am on this planet.

The word condemned me to die.
I write to bear witness to my existence.
I try to banish my solitude, to demonstrate
to the world that I am here.

Mendel Mann

"Poor stranger, you shout, you scream,
don't you see it's hopeless?"

"Yes, I see."

"Then why do you go on?"

"I'll tell you why. In the beginning
I thought I could change man. Today
I know I cannot. If I still shout today, if I still scream, it is to prevent man from ultimately
changing me."

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Keene High School Reading Center

House on Prague Street, The	Demetz, Hana 0-553-20184-0	
Nightfather	Friedman, Carl 0-89255-210-7	Children learn of Holocaust from father who was there
Endless Steppe, The	Hautzig, Esther 0-06-447027-X	1940's Siberian camp
Hiroshima	Hersey, John 0-553-26058-8	Six survivors' stories
Farewell To Manzanar	Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki 0-553-27258-6	Japanese American internment camp
Gentlehands	Kerr, M. E. 0-06-447067-9	
Mischling, Second Degree	Koehn, Ilse 0-14-034290-7	World War II Germany
Itsuka	Kogawa, Joy 0-385-46885-7	Canadian internment
Night Journey, The	Lasky, Kathryn 0-14-032048-2	
Number the Stars	Lowry, Lois 0-440-80164-8	Jewish girl in Denmark, WW II
Soldier's Tale, A	M.K. Joseph 0-00-614491-8	WW II French collaborator-- adult
Lisa's War	Matas, Carol 0-590-43517-5	Anti-Nazi resistance in Denmark
Last Mission, The	Mazer, Harry 0-440-94797-9	Underage Jewish boy enlists in Air Force WW II--ends up in POW
Snow Treasure	McSwigan, Marie 0-590-42537-4	Norwegian children smuggle gold by Nazis
Devil in Vienna, The	Orgel, Doris 0-440-91777-8	
Journey Back, The	Reiss, Johanna 0-06-447042-3	
Friedrich	Richter, Hans Peter 0-14-032205-1	Late 1930's Germany

Title House on Prague Street, The
Author Demetz, Hana
ISBN number 0-553-20184-0
Subject

Title Hiroshima
Author Hersey, John
ISBN number 0-553-26058-8
Subject Six survivors' stories

Title Farewell To Manzanar
Author Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki
ISBN number 0-553-27258-6
Subject Japanese American internment camp

Title Gentlehands
Author Kerr, M. E.
ISBN number 0-06-447067-9
Subject

Title Itsuka
Author Kogawa, Joy
ISBN number 0-385-46885-7
Subject Sequel to Itsuka, Canadian internment of

Title Night Journey, The
Author Lasky, Kathryn
ISBN number 0-14-032048-2
Subject

Title Soldier's Tale, A
Author M.K. Joseph
ISBN number 0-00-614491-8
Subject WW II French collaborator--adult

Title Lisa's War
Author Matas, Carol
ISBN number 0-590-43517-5
Subject

Title Last Mission, The
Author Mazer, Harry
ISBN number 0-440-94797-9
Subject Underage Jewish boy enlists in Air Force WW

Title Snow Treasure
Author McSwigan, Marie
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Subject Norwegian children smuggle gold by Nazis

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Author Orgel, Doris
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Subject

Title Journey Back, The
Author Reiss, Johanna
ISBN number 0-06-447042-3
Subject

Title I Was There
Author Richter, Hans Peter
ISBN number 0-14-032206-X
Subject Hitler youth movement

Title Hannah Senesh: Her Life & Diary
Author Senesh, Hannah
ISBN number 0-8052-0410-5
Subject

Title Upon the Head of the Goat
Author Siegal, Aranka
ISBN number 0-451-16769-4
Subject Childhood in Hungary 1939-44

Title Moon Is Down, The
Author Steinbeck, John
ISBN number 0-14-006222-X
Subject Norwegian town during occupation by Nazis--

Title Hiding Place, The
Author Ten Boom, Corrie
ISBN number 0-553-25669-6
Subject Family hides Jews from Nazis in Holland

Title Dawn
Author Wiesel, Elie
ISBN number 0-553-22536-7
Subject Post-Holocaust Israel -- adult

READING PARTNER WORK

NAME _____
PARTNER _____
DATE DUE _____

Book _____

For this book report, you will be working in pairs; each of you is responsible for reading the book and completing seven activities by the date your book report is due. Each of you will choose three assignments from the quiz category and four assignments from the test category. When completed, you will pass in a packet consisting of 14 separate assignments for the one book. Please make sure that your name is on each assignment so that I will know whom receives which grade. Each assignment will receive a separate grade.

QUIZZES (QUIZ GRADE - SHORT ASSIGNMENT)

1. **Chapter questions.** You must complete at least 5 sheets of questions (at least 5 per chapter) for 5 chapters. You may choose which chapters you would like to create the questions for.
2. **Two essay question exam.** Devise two essay questions that could be used as a final test that deal with the book as a whole.
3. **Radio Ad Script** - create a radio ad script which is designed to sell your book; this should be at least a minute long. I am concerned with the actual script; you do not have to put this on cassette - that is your choice and would be extra credit if you did.
4. **Crossword puzzle** - using characters and actions from the story. We have a program available in the reading lab.
5. **Word search** - using terms, characters, actions, etc. from the story.
6. **Author report** - some information is available in your book; other sources are in the library

TESTS (TEST GRADE - LONGER ASSIGNMENTS)

1. **Book summary** - 1 to 2 pages long
2. **Book critique** - to include a one paragraph summary, strong points of book, weak points of book, recommended reading audience and why, and mention the main characters.
3. **Objective test** - to include (minimum) 10 fill in the blank, 10 true or false, 10 multiple choice, 10 character ID matching, 10 short answer questions.
4. **Alternate ending** - at least 2 pages long, write it as if you are the author, keep the story in the same person and style.
5. **Related topic research report** - choose a related topic from your story and find sources available on this topic. Be sure to list the sources you use for this report.
6. **Character analysis chart** - list the major characters and describe them. Discuss their physical appearance, personality, major actions in story, how others perceive them and think of them.
7. **Poster/ Collage** - to advertise the book. You choose the pictures and the graphics, lettering, etc. Must include title, author, brief description.
8. **Comic book of your novel.** Should be at least 3 pages long, contain illustrations. (Choose one chapter to turn into a comic book format)

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